

Inventor:

Theresa Ann KING
1352 Middlesex Ave
Atlanta, Georgia 30306
U.S. Citizen

PACKAGE FOR CONTROLLING DIETARY CALORIC INTAKE

TECHNICAL FIELD

- 1 The present invention relates to a display system for storing and displaying food
- 2 items and other items that one may desire to give as a gift. More specifically, the
- 3 present invention relates to a display of fancifully packages that is aesthetically
- 4 pleasing, the aesthetics serving as a disincentive to eating the food related contents
- 5 and thus providing a means to control dietary intake.

**STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR
DEVELOPMENT**

(Not applicable.)

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Over the eons, human beings have evolved in an environment of scarcity.

Accordingly, human beings are usually capable, indeed desirous of eating at any time. Such natural tendencies are amplified in the presence of food, whether the same is seen, smelled or simply when the location of the same is known.

Today, however, and particularly so in the United States of America, scarcity has been replaced by wide availability of large quantities of inexpensive food, much of it of superlative quality. Accordingly, the natural tendency to eat is out of place and dangerous, and instincts honed for countless millennia to work in favor of survival are now located in a environment where they can easily cause the opposite effect.

The disadvantages of overeating are even now being discovered. While, a hundred years ago, weight was considered to be healthy, and perhaps in the context of health conditions at that time even favored survival if such overweight was moderate, quite the opposite view has emerged in the last fifty years. In addition to the well known damage done by excess fat in terms of stress on the heart, limbs and other parts of the body, it has now become apparent that even at the cellular level, the longevity of cells is adversely impacted by excess caloric intake. Accordingly, strategies for "caloric deprivation" as a mechanism for increasing human life span have evolved.

Notwithstanding the acknowledged health benefits of maintaining low to normal body weight and, of course, the incentives to simply look good, the vast majority of Americans are overweight to varying extents. In an attempt to address this

1 problem, numerous strategies have evolved. These strategies, to varying degrees do
2 work for some segment of the population, with various strategies working better for
3 some rather than others. Generally, diet plans work by varying the amount and
4 type of foods which the person who is trying to lose or maintain weight eats. For
5 example, some diets attempt to remove starch from the diet and increase the amount
6 of protein consumed by the individual. Other diets seeks to remove high calorie
7 substances having deleterious health effects, such as hard animal fats, for example,
8 butter, cheese and fatty meats.

9
10 Still another approach involves the psychology of eating. For example, some diets
11 stress the intake of salads and other high volume foods which satisfy the need for
12 the appearance of the consumption of food by the person on the diet. Such
13 approaches are relatively successful for many people.

14
15 As can be seen from the above, these traditional approaches work by directly
16 attacking the problem, namely, reducing the intake of food and or psychologically
17 trying to satisfy the individual's desire to consume food.

18
19 Nevertheless, both of these approaches merely address hunger and satisfaction but
20 do not attack directly the natural tendency of an individual, upon seeing some food,
21 to desire to eat that food, if it suits the taste.

22
23 Recently, substantial success has been achieved by an almost cult-like approach to
24 dieting. In particular, at least one religious group has begun to preach to its
25 members about the moral inappropriateness of overeating. This harkens back to
26 traditional religious teachings of the middle ages regarding the cardinal sin of
27 overeating. In any case, this almost cult-like approach has been successful in
28 helping many individuals to reduce weight where other approaches have failed.

1 Not surprisingly, however, many members of the public have taken issue with the
2 approach employed here.

3

4

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 In accordance with the invention, positive psychological incentives are provided to
6 prevent consumption of food, particularly when an individual is not hungry. The
7 same is achieved through the use of a packaging system which, at the same time, is
8 attractive and makes it unnecessary to have closet space within which to store the
9 food product. In addition, the same is achieved while providing numerous
10 compartmentalized portions of various food varieties, thus providing the
11 opportunity to maintain freshness and provide variety.

12

13 In accordance with one embodiment of the invention the same is achieved through
14 providing a plurality of individual packages each of which has a particular pleasing
15 shape, with all of the shapes working together to provide an overall decorative
16 appearance. This decorative appearance is enhanced by the contents of the packages
17 which are visible from outside the packages thus contributing to the overall
18 sculptural effect.

19

20 In accordance with the preferred embodiment, this sculptural effect is unified, for
21 example, a flower pot with flowers, a swimming pool with a number of swimmers
22 diving into it, or the like. Each of the individualized compartments has a decorative
23 shape and is transparent for containing and displaying a quantity of an edible
24 product, such as peanuts, cookies, raisins or the like. The overall arrangement, for
25 example, of flowers in a pot, is set up to be attractive as a whole. The contents of the
26 transparent packages which form the actual blossom portions of the flower are
27 mounted on stems which, in turn, are mounted in a base such as a flower pot. The
28 base may be filled with Styrofoam or other similar materials suitable for receiving

1 support stems and supporting stems with "blossom" packages at the top end of the
2 stem.

3

4 In accordance with the invention, the flower pot with the various blossoms in it
5 filled with foods, such as peanuts, raisins or the like or filled with a single item of
6 food, such as a cookie. The overall decorative appearance is more attractive than the
7 empty packages. Accordingly, in accordance with the invention, psychological
8 incentives exist, in least some individuals, to discourage the consumption of the
9 food in the individual transparent packages. Such effects may be observed, for
10 example, in the case of birthday cakes, where particularly beautiful parts of the
11 decoration of a birthday cake maybe left till the last consumption, in order to
12 preserve the aesthetic beauty of the birthday cake. The same psychological forces
13 will deter the consumption of food in these decorative packages constructed in
14 accordance with the invention.

15

16

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

17 One or more embodiments of the invention and of making and using the invention,
18 as well as the best mode contemplated of carrying out the invention, are described in
19 detail below, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in
20 which:

21 Figure 1 is a front view of an embodiment of the present invention;

22 Figure 2 is a front view of an embodiment of the container of the present
23 invention illustrated in Figure 1;

24 Figure 3 is a side view of the embodiment of the container illustrated in
25 Figure 2;

26 Figure 4 is a side view of an alternative embodiment of the container
27 illustrated in Figure 2, further illustrating a receiving member for the support
28 member of the embodiment of the present invention illustrated in Figure 1;

1 Figure 5 is a front view of the decorative fascia of the embodiment of the
2 present invention illustrated in Figure 1;

3 Figure 6 is a front view of an alternative embodiment of the present invention
4 further illustrating multiple containers per package, where each container is
5 different from the others in size and shape;

6 Figure 7 is a front view of an embodiment of the present invention wherein
7 the decorative fascia and container are configured to look like a pig's head;

8 Figure 8 is a front view of an embodiment of the present invention wherein
9 the decorative fascia and container are configured to look like a baseball hat with a
10 sample message;

11 Figure 9 is a rear view of an embodiment of the present invention, further
12 illustrating a label providing a message, and securing the support to the container of
13 the present invention;

14 Figure 10 is a cross-sectional view of the base portion illustrated in

15 Figure 1 further illustrating a support material to hold the packaging system
16 in place;

17 Figure 11 is a top view of an alternative embodiment of the support material;

18 Figure 12 is a cross-sectional view of the support material of Figure 11 in a
19 base;

20 Figure 13 is a front view of an alternative embodiment of the present
21 invention, where the support member is configured and dimensioned to accept the
22 container;

23 Figure 14 is a front view of the support of the embodiment illustrated in
24 Figure 13;

25 Figure 15 is a front view of the decorative fascia of the embodiment
26 illustrated in Figure 13;

27 Figure 16 is a front view of an alternative embodiment of a container of the
28 present invention;

1 Figure 17 is a side view of a container of the present invention illustrated in
2 Figure 16;

3 Figure 18 is a front view of an alternative embodiment of the present
4 invention wherein the aesthetic aspect of the invention is from the arrangement of
5 the containers;

6 Figure 19 is a front view of a single container in an open position of the
7 embodiment of the present invention illustrated in Figure 18;

8 Figure 20 is a front view of a single container in a closed position of the
9 embodiment of the present invention illustrated in Figure 18;

10 Figure 21 is a side view of the embodiment of the present invention
11 illustrated in Figure 18;

12 Figure 22 is a front view of an alternative embodiment of the present
13 invention wherein the containers are arranged for three dimensional aesthetics;

14 Figure 23 is a top view of the embodiment of the present invention illustrated
15 in Figure 22 with one of the containers in the positions;

16 Figure 24 shows an inventive decorative object incorporating a product, such
17 as a cookie;

18 Figure 25 is a view along the line 25 -- 25 of Figure 24 showing the
19 construction of the inventive decorative object illustrated in Figure 24;

20 Figure 26 shows a clamshell container useful in accordance with the present
21 invention;

22 Figure 26A shows a clamshell container useful in accordance with the present
23 invention very similar to the embodiment illustrated in Figure 26 without holes in
24 the rear cover;

25 Figure 27 illustrates the details of the locking mechanism for the clamshell
26 illustrated in Figure 26 with a view similar to that a Figure 25 but enlarged and
27 exaggerated to illustrate function;

28 Figure 28 is a detail plan views showing an inventive mechanism for locking

1 product carrying member into a decorative frame;

2 Figure 29 is a view along lines 29-29 of Figure 28;

3 Figure 30 is a plan view of the decorative arrangement of decorative objects
4 such as that illustrated in Figures 24 - 29;

5 Figure 31 is a plan view along lines 31 -- 31 of Figure 30;

6 Figure 32 is a view of an inspirational sign useful in the arrangement
7 illustrated in Figure 30; and

8 Figure 33 illustrates an alternative locking arrangement for locking a product
9 carrier into a decorative frame.

10

11

12 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

13 In accordance with the invention, positive psychological incentives are provided to
14 prevent consumption of food, particularly when an individual is not hungry. The
15 same is achieved through the use of a packaging system which, at the same time, is
16 attractive and makes it unnecessary to have closet space within which to store the
17 food product.

18

19 More specifically, Figure 1 illustrates a packaging system for controlling dietary
20 caloric intake 10, package 10 is comprised of a container 12, a decorative fascia 14
21 and a support 16. Support 16 is positioned in base 18, which contains a material 20
22 that holds support 16 in place within base 18.

23

24 Figure 2 illustrates a container 12 in accordance with the preferred embodiment.

25 Container 12 is comprised of a lid 22 and a base portion 24. Base portion 24 is
26 configured and dimensioned such that it can receive items that a gift giver would
27 like to give to the recipient, including but not limited to: food items such as candy,
28 coffee, chocolates, hot cocoa mix, sunflower seeds, nuts, cereal, a dry mix for

1 cookies, prepared cookies, pasta, bath items such as bath salts, soaps, bath beads,
2 and potpourri. Lid 22 is secured to base portion 24 by any means common in the
3 container arts, such as friction, adhesive, tape or by a label 30.

4

5 Container 12 is affixed to support 16 by any common means, such as with adhesive,
6 adhesive tape, or fastener, as is illustrated in Figure 3. Further, lid 22 and/or base
7 portion 24 of container 12 can contain a lip to which fascia 14 can be attached.

8 Alternatively, container 112 can contain a support receiving section 130 which can
9 securedly receive support 116.

10

11 Container 12 can come in a variety of sizes and shapes as will be described in more
12 detail.

13

14 Turning now to Figure 5, decorative fascia 14 is illustrated. Decorative fascia 14 is
15 comprised of an outer area 26 and an inner ring 28. Outer area 26 can be shaped to
16 represent a wide varied of items, such as a sun, a fish (Figure 6), a pig head (Figure
17 7), or a baseball cap (Figure 8) with a message 26 on container 12 supporting a team,
18 for example. Inner ring 28 is configured and dimensioned to surround container 12
19 such a manner as to allow securing between container 12 and fascia 14.

20

21 Figure 9 illustrates the placement of the label, affixing support 16 to container 12.

22 The label could contain information of the product contained with the package, a
23 message about the manufacturer of the product, a message from the purchaser of the
24 product for the recipient, or a message from the store selling the product.

25

26 Turning now to material 20, Figure 1 illustrates a block of material 20 placed in base
27 18. Alternatively, base 18 can be filled with material 120 which is designed to
28 conform to the inner surfaces of base 118, as is illustrated in Figure 10. Material 20

1 can be of any type commonly used, such as styrofoam, sand, packing "peanuts", or
2 florist's foam. Material 20 must be of a density sufficient to keep package 10 from
3 moving within base 18.

4

5 Alternatively, as illustrated in Figures 11 and 12, material 320 can be made of a rigid
6 board-like material, such as cardboard with flaps 332, 334, 336 and 338 that can
7 folded to conform to the inside of base 318. The support engaging surface 340
8 having voids 342 cut out to accept supports 316 and hold them in place.

9

10 Additionally, material 20 can be composed of a combination of rigid board like
11 material as illustrated in Figures 11 and 12 and any type commonly used, such as
12 styrofoam, sand, packing "peanuts", or florist's foam.

13

14 In another embodiment, base 218 can contain multiple packages 210 as is illustrated
15 in Figure 6. Base 218 containing packages 210 of many shapes and sizes. Further,
16 Figure 6 illustrates base 218 in an optional shape, in this embodiment as a fish.
17 Additionally, base 218 contains an optional message 226.

18

19 In a preferred alternative embodiment illustrated in Figures 13 - 15, package 410 is
20 comprised of a container 412 made of clear plastic, a decorative fascia 414, and a
21 support 416. Support 416 is a one piece unit having an upper portion 444 which is
22 cut out in the same shape as fascia 414 and designed to receive fascia 414 by any
23 common means, such as adhesive, stitching, or fasteners. Fascia 414 being made up
24 of pieces, a front and a back piece designed to cover the front and back surfaces of
25 upper portion 444.

26

27 Figures 16 and 17 illustrate an alternative container design 412. Container 412 is
28 comprised of a lid 422 and a base portion 424. Base portion 424 is configured to

1 receive items that a gift giver would like to give. Additionally, base portion 424 can
2 have a void 425 that can be used to store the containers off of a horizontal surface,
3 such as a shelf or counter-top. Lid 422 is secured to base portion 424 by any means
4 common in the container arts.

5
6 In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 19 - 21, package 510 is comprised of a
7 container 512 and a support 516. Container 512 has multiple chambers 546. Each
8 chamber having a base portion 524 and a lid 522. Lid 522 being secured to base
9 portion 524 by any means common in the container arts. Each chamber 546 can be
10 filled with a different gift. Additionally, chamber 546 can be a varied in color, shape
11 and size such that container 512 can have varied designs, such as a fish, flower, or
12 automobile. Support 516 is attached to container by any means common in the art.

13
14 In a further embodiment, illustrated in Figures 22 and 23, package 610 is
15 comprised of a container 612 and a support 616. Container 612 being comprised of
16 multiple chambers 646. Each chamber has a base portion 624 and a lid 622. Lid 622
17 being secured to base portion 624 by any means common in the container arts.
18 Support 616 is configured and dimensioned such that container 612 extends
19 longitudinally from a portion of support 616.

20
21 In accordance with one embodiment of the invention the same is achieved through
22 providing a plurality of individual packages each of which has a particular pleasing
23 shape, with all of the shapes working together to provide an overall decorative
24 appearance. This decorative appearance is enhanced by the contents of the packages
25 which are visible from outside the packages thus contributing to the overall
26 sculptural effect.

27
28 In accordance with the preferred embodiment, the overall decorative appearance is

1 more attractive than the empty packages. Accordingly, psychological incentives
 2 exist, in least some individuals, to discourage the consumption of the food in the
 3 individual transparent packages. Such effects may be observed, for example, in the
 4 case of birthday cakes, where particularly beautiful parts of the decoration of a
 5 birthday cake maybe left till the last consumption, in order to preserve the aesthetic
 6 beauty of the birthday cake. The same psychological forces will deter the
 7 consumption of food in these decorative packages constructed in accordance with
 8 the invention.

9
 10 By adding non-food items in with the food items, the incentive exists to leave the
 11 arrangement as a whole and not binge, thus leaving on the non-food items, leaving a
 12 sparse appearance.

13
 14 A particularly preferred embodiment of the invention is illustrated in Figure 24. In
 15 particular, in accordance with this embodiment of the invention, a simulated
 16 decorative object 710 comprises a support frame 712, and a transparent product
 17 carrier 714. Support frame 712 defines an inner circumferential hole 716 which
 18 supports transparent product carrier 714. Support frame 712 defines various
 19 decorative elements, including leaves 718, a stem 720, and flower petals 722. An
 20 inspirational message 724 is imprinted on the surface of support frame 712. In the
 21 illustrated example the inspirational message does "Faith Is the Bird That Feels the
 22 Light When the Dawn Is Still Dark-Tagore". Of course, anyone of numerous other
 23 inspirational messages may be used in accordance with the invention. In addition,
 24 various features 726 defining parts of the simulated decorative object are imprinted
 25 on the surface of support frame 712. Such imprinting may be done by any suitable
 26 technique, such as offset printing, silkscreen printing, hand painting or like.

27
 28 In accordance with the invention, support frame 712 may be made of any suitable

material, such as corrugated cardboard, cardboard without corrugations, plastic, or any other suitable and preferably inexpensive material that has the rigidity and strength to support product carrier 714 with a product in its such as bath beads, a chocolate chip cookie, nuts, or like. In the illustrated example, a cookie 728 can be seen through the face of transparent product carrier 714. The same may be manufactured by anyone of numerous techniques well-known in the art, such as die cutting, hand cutting with a blade, or any other suitable procedure.

Referring to Figures 25 and 26, the construction of transparent product carrier 714 may be better understood. In particular, transparent product carrier 714 includes a sloped sidewall 730 adapted to be received by the inner circumferential hole 716. A shoulder 732 lends rigidity to the structure and this rigidity is reinforced by rim 734. The face 736 of transparent carrier 714, together with a conical sidewall 730, shoulder 732, annular cylindrical section 736, and rim 734 forms the front portion 737 of transparent product carrier 714.

As can be seen most clearly with reference to Figures 26 and 27, rear portion 739 of transparent product carrier 714 is formed by a rear face 738, cylindrical annular portion 740, ring-shaped support surface 742, and facing cylindrical annular portion 744.

As can be seen most clearly with reference to Figure 26, transparent product carrier 714 is formed from clear, transparent and preferably colorless plastic in a slight configuration which includes a substantially straight elongated creasing portion 746, along which transparent product carrier 714 is folded to form the product carrier into the configuration illustrated in Figure 25. The particular, when it is desired to form simulated decorative object 710, a product, such as cookie 728 is inserted into front portion 737, and a backer cardboard 748 or paper label is inserted into rear

1 portion 739. Front portion 737 and rear portion 739 are then popped into mating
2 and locking engagement with each other.

3

4 The mating and locking engagement referred to above may be understood with
5 respect to Figure 27. In particular, annular cylindrical section 736 is slightly conical
6 and configuration sloping radially inwardly toward the rear of the carrier, and
7 mating annular cylindrical section 744 is also slightly conical in configuration and
8 slopes radially inwardly toward the rear of the carrier, but has a slightly smaller
9 radius, best resulting in structures which locking in position. We can spend plastic
10 of which transparent product carrier 714 is made, is flexible and thus allows the
11 surfaces to bend and flex into mating locking arrangement.

12

13 The rear portion 739 includes a variety of holes, including, a large hole 750 and a
14 small hole which performs the function of allowing air exchange between the
15 environment and the inside of carrier 714. For example allowing fragrances of
16 potpourri or bath salts to escape the product carrier 714. Additionally, the holes 750
17 can be finger gripping hole 750 which allows the user to grasp transparent product
18 carrier 714 and open it.

19

20 A carrier 814 without holes (Figure 26A) can also be utilized when air exchange is
21 not desirable, such as when cookies are contained within carrier 814.

22

23 In accordance with the embodiment illustrated in Figures 24-27, sloped conical
24 sidewall 730 includes surface features 756 adapted to retain transparent product
25 carrier 714 within support frame 712. In particular, with reference to Figures 28 and
26 29, such surface features may take the form of curved upper triangular indentations
27 758 which fit into curved lower triangular indentations 760. Together, curved upper
28 triangular indentations 758 and curved lower triangular indentations 760 form an

1 annular valley 762 which lockingly receives the inner circumferential surface of
2 inner circumferential hole 716 of support frame 712.

3

4 In accordance with the preferred embodiment, it is contemplated that a plurality of
5 simulated decorative objects 710 will be arranged in a bouquet or other arrangement
6 764, as illustrated in Figures 30 and 31. The inventive arrangement 764 may also
7 include other elements, such as tissue paper 766, an inspirational sign 768 (Figure 32)
8 and a container such as one shaped as a power pot 770. Inside flowerpot 770 is a
9 cardboard or home plastic or other support 772 which receives the stem portions 774
10 of simulated decorative objects 710, and, if included in the post portion 776 of
11 inspirational sign 768. The decorative bouquet being covered in a cellophane-like
12 material for transport and display.

13

14 Figure 33 illustrates an alternate mechanism for locking a product carrier into a
15 decorative frame other than that illustrated in Figures 28 and 29 did indicate it, any
16 arrangement which provides for a valley said his belly 762 large enough to receive
17 the decorative frame, such as support frame 712 will function to retain a package
18 such as product carrier 714. In particular, Figure 33 illustrates a product carrier 814
19 with a non-conical sidewall 878 which includes an annular bump which defines an
20 annular valley 882 for lockingly receiving a decorative support frame 812.

21

22 In the description, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, which form a
23 part hereof, and which illustrate examples of the invention. Such examples,
24 however, are not exhaustive of the various embodiments of the invention, and
25 therefore, reference is made to the claims which follow the description for
26 determining the scope of the invention. While illustrative embodiments of the
27 invention has been described, it is, of course, understood that various modifications
28 of the invention will be obvious to those of ordinary skill in the art. Such

1 modifications are within the spirit and scope of the invention which is limited and
2 defined by the appended claims.

3

4

5